



SHARPENING IRON

BUILDING GODLY FRIENDSHIPS



Lesson 1

What Is Friendship?

What Is Friendship?

- The relationship we have with a friend
- A form of love

The Purpose of Friendship

- To glorify God

How is friendship different from other relationships?

The Blessings of Friendship

- Fun
 - **Companionship**
 - Illustration: Adam and Eve
- Support

How does God respond to us
when we're hopeless and
helpless?

The Blessings of Friendship

- Community
 - **Illustration: Finding new friends**

The Blessings of Friendship

- Growth
 - **Illustration: King Rehoboam's counsel**
(2 Chron. 10:6–11, 16–19;
1 Kings 12:1–20)

Can a Christian be friends with
someone who is unsaved?





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Lesson 2

Characteristics of a Good Friend

Think about your best friend.
What makes your friendship
with him or her so great? What
makes you “click”?

A Good Friend Loves

- Love for God
 - **Give God top priority.**
 - **Spend time with God.**
 - **Obey God.**

A Good Friend Loves

- Love for others

What are some specific ways to show love in a friendship?

A Good Friend Loves

- Love for others
 - **Compassion and empathy**
 - **Sacrifice**

What are some things we
sacrifice for our friends?

A Good Friend Loves

- Love for others
 - **Compassion and empathy**
 - **Sacrifice**
 - **Commitment**
 - Illustration: David and Jonathan
(1 Sam. 18–20)

A Good Friend Builds Trust

- Be faithful the way God is faithful.
- How to build trust
 - **Be loyal.**
 - **Keep your promises.**
 - **Open up to safe friends.**
 - **Don't gossip.**

A Good Friend Reaches Out to Others





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Lesson 3

Characteristics of a Bad Friend

Wrong Friends

- The violent (Prov. 3:31–32; 16:29)
 - **Illustration: Rehoboam**
- The angry (Prov. 22:24–25)

Is anger always wrong?

Wrong Friends

- The violent (Prov. 3:31–32; 16:29)
 - **Illustration: Rehoboam**
- The angry (Prov. 22:24–25)
- The addicted (Prov. 23:20–21)
 - **Illustration: Controlled substances**

Wrong Friends

- The foolish (Prov. 13:20)
- The gossip (Prov. 20:19)

Self-Centered Friendship

- The opposite of 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

What does a self-centered
friend look like?

Self-Centered Friendship

- Impatient (v. 4)
- Mean-spirited, hurtful, critical (v. 4)
- Arrogant and rude (vv. 4–5)
- Short-tempered, irritable, resentful (v. 5)

Self-Centered Friendship

- Delights in evil (v. 6)
- Accepts others conditionally (v. 7)
- Mistrusts (v. 7)
- Won't stick with it (v. 7)





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Lesson 4

Building a Good Friendship

Listen Well

- Watch your body language.
 - **Illustration: Mixed signals**
- Focus on the speaker.
- Be open-minded.
 - **Illustration: Be a good guest**

Listen Well

- Ask questions to understand.
- Restate their views.
 - **Illustration: Reflective listening**
- Agree to disagree.

What are some differences
between in-person and online
communication?

Learn How to Encourage

- Show interest in them.
- Identify with them.
- Edify them.





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Lesson 5

How to Heal a Friendship

Preparing to Resolve Conflict

- Examine yourself first (Matt. 7:1–5).

Does it matter if I didn't intend
to hurt my friend?

Preparing to Resolve Conflict

- Examine yourself first (Matt. 7:1–5).
- Decide whether to address a problem or let it go (Prov. 10:12; 17:9).

Let It Go If . . .

- Your friend doesn't usually act this way.
- The offense could have been an innocent mistake.
- You can *easily* let it go.

Address the Problem If . . .

- The offender is hurting others in the same way.
- The offender is acting illegally.
- The offender is committing sin.

When a Christian Sins Against You (Matt. 18:15–20)

1. Try to resolve the issue with the person privately (v. 15).
2. Try to resolve the issue with the person again and bring one or two more people with you (v. 16).

When a Christian Sins Against You (Matt. 18:15–20)

3. Present the offense to the church and let the assembly address the offender (v. 17).
4. Assume the offender is an unbeliever and treat them as such (v. 17).

The Matthew 18 Process Is . . .

- Decided by the entire church.
- For actual sin.
- Ultimately about reconciling the offender to God, not getting justice for yourself or punishing the offender.

Forgive (Eph. 4:31–32)

- God is merciful.
- God has shown us mercy.
- God will not forgive us if we don't forgive others (Mark 11:25).

Can you forgive someone who
refuses to admit wrongdoing?

Forgive (Eph. 4:31–32)

- Illustration: Reconciling vs. restoring

Review

Lesson 1

What Is Friendship?

- Friendship is a way to share God's goodness with a friend.
- The purpose of friendship is to glorify God.
- Friendship offers fun, support, community, and growth.

Lesson 2

Characteristics of a Good Friend

- A good friend loves, builds trust, and reaches out.
- Love often requires personal sacrifice.

Lesson 3

Characteristics of a Bad Friend

- We should not make close friends with people who degrade themselves or others.
- Self-centeredness is the opposite of the love described in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7.

Lesson 4

Building a Good Friendship

- Good listening requires paying attention.
- Verbal and nonverbal communication are equally important.
- We should respect our friends, even when we disagree.

Lesson 5

How to Heal a Friendship

- Before you confront a friend who has wronged you, address your own sin.
- If possible and appropriate, let love cover minor offenses.

Lesson 5

How to Heal a Friendship

- Forgiveness is unconditional, but reconciliation and restoration depend on the willingness of both parties.

